

# Women’s Golf hits the ground running in first two competitions of the spring season

By **BROOKE FRIBERG**  
*Sports Editor*

The women’s golf team traveled to Cortland, N.Y. to compete in the Martin and Wallace Invitational, hosted by SUNY Cortland. Despite the first day, April 13, of the tournament being canceled due to unfavorable weather conditions, the Panthers demonstrated resilience throughout the weekend. The team ended up fifth place out of 15 teams with a team total score of 309, showcasing their ability to adapt and compete under pressure.

The invitational was the Panthers’ first competition of the spring season.

Captain Sophia Hwang ’24 led the team with a 74 and a fifth place finish. Hwang described the weekend as a confirmation of the values the team strives to embody.

“It was kind of a testament to

something we’ve been working on as a team; learning how to respond to a situation, not just react to it,” she said.

Mia Politano ’25, who carded a 78 en route to a 21st place finish, recounted the moment the tournament was canceled on Saturday, just as the group was gearing up to play.

“The first day when we showed up, we were all layered up — I think all of us were wearing at least five layers on the top and three on the bottom,” Politano told The Campus. “Then as soon as we got off the bus, the horn blew and they brought everyone in and they canceled the day.”

On Sunday, the Panthers showed up inspired by the prior day’s setbacks and eager to prove themselves. Competition on Sunday did not come without its own set of challenges, however — the tournament had already been shortened from 36 to 18 holes of total competition, and another lightning delay

required players to seek safety indoors for a half hour before returning to finish up their rounds.

In the end, the team adapted well enough to finish fifth, down twelve strokes on the eventual winners Williams College and just two strokes shy of fourth-place finisher Hamilton College. The Panthers also finished just six strokes behind defending NESCAC champions Amherst College, a gap they would hope to close in a regular 36 hole tournament.

Chloe Levins ’20, who previously served as a team captain and rejoined the squad this year as an assistant coach, expressed her pride in the team’s performance.

“I think they did tremendously well, and they’re setting themselves up for a successful spring,” Levins said. “The girls we have on the team are extremely motivated — they are dedicated athletes and they are incredibly talented.

It’s honestly been a pleasure to work with them so far this spring, and I’m looking forward to a few more events together and to finish out the spring season strong.”

The following weekend, the Panthers surged to a third-placed finish among a competitive field of 17 teams at the Jack Leaman Invitational hosted by Amherst College. Middlebury notably eclipsed Williams, Hamilton and New York University, all of whom had beaten them the previous week. Their performance was good enough for second in the NESCAC behind Amherst, and the Panthers posted the lowest score of any team to win the second day of competition in an impressive display of resolve.

Audrey Tir ’25 paced the Panthers with a two-day total of 152, after recording the lowest individual score of any player on the second day.

Looking ahead, the Panthers are eager to showcase their skills at the NESCAC

Championships, hosted by Williams on May 4–5.

With just two tournaments behind them in their buildup to the conference championship, the end of the season is in sight. If Hwang and her teammates stay calm and continue to keep their cool, they might be within striking distance of their first NESCAC title — Hwang described these as the keys to success in the remainder of their short, yet intense season.

“[We are] balancing the nerves and figuring out what we can do to best prepare ourselves for the matches ahead,” Hwang added.

With each challenge they overcome, Middlebury women’s golf reaffirms their dedication to their sport, leaving no doubt that they are ready to dominate the remainder of the spring season.



COURTESY PHOTO/ WILLIAM HAIG

Sophia Hwang ’24 led the Panthers in their opening competition of the season, placing fifth after 18 holes at the Martin and Wallace Invitational last weekend.

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SIMON PEARCE

## Spring Student Symposium launches 17th year with a bang — and a balloon

By **JULIA PEPPER**  
*Senior Local Editor*

With 245 student presenters representing 35 departments ranging from Biology to History to Film and Media Culture, Middlebury hosted its 17th annual Student Spring Symposium last Friday, April 19.

But the 109 oral presentations and 56 poster presentations were not all that took off on Friday. A team of students and professors from the Physics department also launched Middlebury's first ever high-altitude balloon to a captivated audience of over one hundred people inside and outside BiHall, providing a real-time insight into the research of the Physics department.

Amy Morsman, professor of History and director of the Center for Teaching Learning and Research (CTLR), co-chaired the Symposium Committee for the first time this year alongside Professor of Anthropology Michael Sheridan, who also co-chaired the committee for the first time but has served on the organization committee for about 10 years.

The symposium was created in



KATIE FUTTERMAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*In order to add a bit more weight to the balloon, the team added a stuffed Middlebury Panther.*

2007 by then-Associate Dean of Student Affairs Karen Guttentag and Dean of Undergraduate Research Pat Manley. The idea behind the symposium has always been to showcase student research at Middlebury, according to Sheridan.

"Part of the inspiration was that few students have the opportunity to go to a professional academic conference," Sheridan wrote in

an email to The Campus. "It's one of the best things our academic community does."

The symposium had roughly 60 participants in its first year and has since grown to have 225–245 participants each year, something President Laurie Patton praised

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### ARTS & CULTURE

## EVOLUTION DANCE HOSTS ITS 10TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

By **JONATHAN EATON**  
*Staff Writer*

Evolution Dance Crew — better known as Evo — celebrated its 10th anniversary on April 20 with two sold out shows featuring 24 student-choreographed dances. The group's first performance was sponsored by the Distinguished Men of Color at their Spring 2014 art showcase. Since then, the group has grown to include over 56 dancers, featuring dance styles ranging from Hawaiian Luau and Hip Hop to Latin, Korean pop and everything in between.

"I'd say Evolution's most important moments over the last ten years are really simple: actually finding footing and stable ground to dance on campus," Evo Co-President Kent Canonigo '24 wrote in an email to The Campus, crediting organizations on campus such as Black Student Union and Distinguished Men of Color for first giving them spaces to dance in. "Given how exclusive Middlebury might feel, Evolution really started off as a desire to dance on campus even if your dance experiences were not properly seen as formal or you just did not have any dance experience to begin with."

Saturday's show was birthday-themed, and each dance was presented as a gift to Evo from its respective choreographer. The event commenced with a video compilation composed of videos from the dancers' childhoods and images from performances by previous generations of Evo dancers, featuring footage ranging from ballet rehearsal



COURTESY PHOTO

*Dancers perform "Girl Dinner," a heels piece.*

to siblings dancing in the living room.

The night opened with "Cartoonivers," choreographed by Canonigo, which celebrated the joys of childhood. The dancers wore rainbow baseball hats with propellers and backpacks.

Many of the junior members of the group also choreographed their own pieces. Aria Saines '27 choreographed a Hawaiian piece titled "Neheneko'aka" and Ashley Aparicio '26 choreographed a piece titled "Mr. Worldwide," which featured tight choreography and bright costumes.

"I took inspiration from the theme which was Evolution's 10th birthday," Aparicio wrote in a message to The Campus. "Evolution was founded in the year 2014 and so I looked for music that was very popular in

that year and music that made you want to dance."

The second half of the show was made up of pieces choreographed by senior members who presented them as gifts to the group. Johnrev Bermudez '24's piece was entitled "Holup... lemme cook." When introducing the number, he explained that his vision was to create a dance that felt good to perform and to just let the dancers have fun. Their joy could be felt throughout the auditorium with many audience members screaming and clapping along enthusiastically.

Canonigo's final gift to Evo was his dance "Planet Mars," which was inspired by his childhood growing up in the

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## Land planning sessions reimagine 3,000 acres of college land

By **ISLA MITCHELL**  
*Contributing Writer*

The college is seeking public input for their development plan for 3,000 acres of college land in the Champlain Valley in various Vermont towns including Middlebury, Cornwall and Weybridge, with smaller amounts in New Haven and Bristol. Throughout April, the college has hosted a series of four land planning and visioning sessions for members of the college community on April 9 and 11, in addition to sessions for the broader local and regional community on April 16 and 24.

The Lands Advisory Group — a collection of Middlebury faculty and staff who advise the administration and Board of Trustees on lands-related decisions — has shared an online

survey to gather information about the community's vision for future use of college-owned land.

Middlebury holds approximately 6,000 acres of land in Vermont, including 2,100 acres of forest and field known as the Bread Loaf lands and 3,000 acres known as the Champlain Valley lands, according to Marc Lapin, associate laboratory professor and college lands conservationist.

Lapin is also the chair of the advisory committee, where he has played a critical role in the college's land steward mission.

Though Middlebury has owned this land for decades, the college's goals for land use have changed over time. "I think that society views land more broadly now than in the 70s and 80s,"

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COURTESY PHOTO / MARC LAPIN

*The college is currently holding visioning sessions for its 3,000 acres of land in the Champlain Valley.*

## JOIN THE CLUB FUNDRAISER FALLS \$80,000 SHORT OF GOAL

By **COLE CHAUDHARI**  
*News Editor*

The inaugural Join the Club initiative concluded after having raised \$18,568 of its \$100,000 goal. The fundraising period officially ran April 11–19, but will remain open through the end of the academic year due to the fact that not all student groups garnered support during the campaign, according to Executive Director of Annual Giving and Donor Relations Kitty Bartlett.

"We raised \$18,168 and we were able to reach 195 different donors, which I think is amazing," said Annie Delehanty, assistant director for student organizations and club sports.

Join the Club is a new effort piloted by advancement this year, according to Bartlett. Advancement also partners with students to fundraise in a number of ways, including the Proud to be a Panther campaign, MiddStart, MiddGoal, Senior Class Gift and the Student Engagement Center, Bartlett wrote. Although the Student Activities Office (SAO) and the Office of Advancement facilitated the initiative, fundraising was primarily student-run.

Some of the top fundraisers were Mens and Women's Club

Soccer, Riddim World Dance Troupe and the Charter House Coalition. As of April 23, those four organizations had raised \$10,957, or 59% of all funds raised. 10 clubs have yet to raise any money.

The initiative began with the opportunity for student organizations to select into the campaign between December 2023 and February of this year, which would ensure their eligibility and prioritization for donations.

Donations were collected on one website, where donors could directly select the clubs to which they wanted to donate.

A marketing toolkit emailed to participating student organizations by Delehanty detailed a number of tips and tricks clubs could use to increase fundraising awareness among potential donors.

The coordinators of the campaign encouraged participants to post and repost content relevant to their fundraising on Instagram and LinkedIn in the Join the Club toolkit. They also recommended that each club recruit alumni, parents and friends to help disseminate information.

The schedule for April provided by the toolkit detailed a prepa-

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# New England Review hosts student reading series

By **OLIVIA MUELLER**

*News Editor*

Five Middlebury student readers showcased their original essays, short stories and poetry in the most recent event in the New England Review (NER) student reading series.

The readers at the April 18 event were Sarah Miller '24, Vee Syengo '25, Yuvraj Shah '26, Emily Wight '24 and Ashling Walsh '24. In addition to the scheduled readers, there was an open-mic with 10 three-minute slots for volunteers to read, as well as refreshments and a raffle.

Wight read an essay titled “Smile” which was written about her grandmother and girlhood in Jamaica. Not only was this Wight’s first time reading for a NER event, but it was also her first time reading her writing in public.

“I was nervous, but Zoe and Cole, the NER interns, did such a great job at creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere,” Wight wrote in an email to The Campus.

Wight said that she enjoyed reading in an intimate and supportive space.

“It was a small space with no mic so you could feel that everyone was really in the moment and listening to each reader,” she wrote.

Wight’s favorite part was listening to the other student readers.

“There’s a kind of magic in the intimacy and vulnerability that

comes with listening to a person read something they’ve written, often about personal topics and experiences,” she wrote.

Shah was also a first time reader, sharing his original short story, “The Photobook.”

“It’s always a great opportunity to present my work outside of an academic setting. The NER student reader events are great ways to get feedback on my writing and present work to people who I would not normally present to,” Shah wrote in an email to The Campus.

Shah previously worked as a research assistant intern for the NER in the summer of 2023, where he worked to catalog the demographics of their writers. While he is familiar with the organization, reading his own work in a live setting was a new experience.

“I had to try to make clear what character was saying what sentence, something that is easier when reading a text as opposed to listening to it,” Shah wrote.

As Shah prepared for the reading, he also had to make decisions about how to present his work to a largely English-speaking audience since his story includes some words in Gujarati.

“I decided to keep the original Gujarati words in my work, as opposed to providing English translations for the audience, to allow the piece to speak for itself,” he wrote.

Walsh shared part of their poetry thesis, “Epithet-Bearer,” which explores queerness in the

American South through a classics-inspired, fragmentary style and fractured narrative. Walsh first became acquainted with the NER this January as an editorial intern. After reading as a volunteer during a previous NER event, this was Walsh’s second time reading at a NER event but their first time as a formally invited reader.

“It was a great experience, and it’s been exciting to connect more with NER through these readings,” they wrote in an email to The Campus.

Walsh commented on how welcoming a space the NER has been for sharing writing.

“It’s extremely gratifying to share my own work in a public, communal space and feel that it’s really making an emotional impact on others,” they wrote.

For Walsh, sharing art can be a vulnerable experience, but having the support and engagement of friends and audience members made the reading enjoyable.

“There were lots of hums, gasps, laughs and everything at all the necessary moments. Folks were definitely taking in all of the work from the readers and making an effort to connect with it. It was fun noticing people flinch when I read a certain line I was proud of or looking up and seeing smiles in the audience,” Walsh wrote.

While none of the pieces students shared were written specifically for the reading, writers took the time to organize their materials and practice leading up to the event. Walsh encouraged students

to explore the opportunities that the NER creates for sharing their written work on campus.

“There is a wild amount of incredibly talented people who have important things to say on this campus. Each reading I’ve gone to has had a few of those pieces that really resonate with me, and I think it’s amazing that the NER is fostering more of those spaces for

everyone. Take advantage of it!” Walsh wrote.

*Editor’s Note: Emily Wight ’24 and Yuvraj Shah ’26 are Opinions Editors for The Campus. Cole Chaudhari ’26 is a News Editor for The Campus. Sarah Miller ’24 is an Editor at Large for The Campus.*



COURTESY PHOTO

*Emily Wight ’24 read a piece about her grandmother and girlhood in Jamaica.*

## LAND PLANNING SESSIONS REIMAGINE 3,000 ACRES OF COLLEGE LAND

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Lapin said.

These sessions and the survey are attempts by the land advisory group to gather community insight firsthand. The group wants to collect information from individuals rather than relying on already-written mission statements and existing plans.

“We could go to documents and websites and pull things out from there, say ‘This is what society is thinking,’ but I would rather have people look at places on the map, tell their stories, envision the long term future, which is hard to get people to do,” Lapin said.

Historically, Middlebury has focused on maintaining agricultural land, developing the local economy and providing a scenic buffer. In recent years, the college has attempted to listen to more voices on land use and how to expand the resources these acres could provide the community.

“This is a really new way of the college interacting with the community, both the college community and the broader community in the region, regarding lands, and think about what will serve society’s needs and desires,” Lapin explained.

The Bread Loaf lands were put under a conservation easement in 2015, binding the land to be used only for the purpose of natural ecological values such as education and outdoor recreation, according to the Middlebury College Lands web page.

The college hopes to create a similar plan for the Champlain Valley lands to serve the community’s current needs and desires. It aims to design a 20–50 year-long plan that considers the values and visions of interest groups and individuals both at the college and in the local community.

The recent events are one part of the college’s efforts to engage community members in discourse about Middlebury’s land use by looking at maps to better understand the land. Lapin described one of his favorite moments of the student sessions as when six students stood around a map and dis-

cussed the land.

Maps help to see the land and determine whether certain plans are complementary or contradictory. Ultimately, the hard decisions come down to the limitations of what can co-exist on the land.

One recurring theme across sessions was the common suggestion to use the land for recreation.

“In the listening sessions we’ve had... what I’ll call over-emphasis on recreation. Which is, I think, because, in the college community particularly, some of us use this land for teaching and research, but most people interact with the land recreationally and visually,” Lapin explained.

Lapin said the board has already discussed a recreation plan being built into the larger land plan. He added that these discussions have generated ideas about designs for safer road crossing — something that the college has previously been aware of, but can now further develop.

For the sessions including community members from the town of Middlebury and surrounding areas, the land advisory group invited leaders from local towns and representatives from interest groups to join the discussion. They called upon people from town governing bodies, local food systems communities, indigenous communities and land conservation communities.

Lapin said he enjoyed listening to different interest groups, including several groups advocating for Vermont towns to allocate land for BIPOC farming.

In order to gather these broader perspectives, the sessions for the college community were scheduled to be accessible to students and faculty during varying times of days and across multiple dates. Despite this, Lapin said that attendance for these sessions was still small.

“I would love for hundreds of people to look at the maps and provide input, think about it. I think it’s a big part of being connected to land,” Lapin said. “Some people talk about the greatest disease of our time being disconnection from ourselves, others, earth. We’re offering opportunities to connect.”

Lily Buren ’26 completed

the college land comprehensive plan survey, which included maps of different zones of land in the Champlain Valley and asked about the individuals’ values and vision for the plots.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if not a lot of people filled out the survey. The way they describe it, it would only be filled out by people who really care about the land, and can recognize the land on the maps,” Buren said.

Buren expressed a personal interest in the land owned by the college. After she looked at the maps, she was able to visualize where they were in relation to her everyday life and her engagement with the outdoors.

Buren shared her vision of what the land should be used for from one student’s perspective, such as allocating land closer to downtown Middlebury for community engagement and expanding community-based recreational activities in the Green Mountains and eastward. She also said she liked the idea of making trails more accessible to the public through updated infrastructure such as bus stops at more accessible sites.

The potential for education was also an important value that Buren associated with the college’s updated land use, suggesting that the land closer to the New York border could be used for research purposes.

“I know that as a biology student, we go to land around there and do some forest composition, data analysis and other types of labs that involve field work. I would love to see if that was expanded,” Buren said.

Although it is the Board of Trustees that gets the final say on the land planning, Lapin believes that the overall purpose of the land is to serve as an educational resource for the college.

Lapin described one participant at Tuesday’s meeting who advocated for all land to be used for educational purposes, an idea which he agrees is important when the college makes final decisions about land use.

“That’s what we do. We’re an educational institution,” Lapin said. “When crafting the plan, the community, the lands advisory Group and the Board of Trustees will ask themselves, ‘When it comes right down to it, are they serving the educational mission or not?’”

## JOIN THE CLUB FUNDRAISER FALLS \$80,000 SHORT OF GOAL

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ration period of April 3 through April 10, where clubs could consolidate information and plan for their individual fundraising campaigns, and then a strong push for outreach during the week of April 11 through April 19, when fundraising would be open to donors.

In an interview with The Campus, the SAO’s Senior Coordinator for Student Organizations Emma Barrett ’24.5 described the successes of the fundraiser and the factors that contributed to the amount of funding clubs received.

“There are some orgs it went really, really well for, and for some, not so much. It depends a lot on the organization. There are some organizations that have done a lot of individual outreach and have seen results from that, and others who haven’t done as much outreach on their own,” Barrett said.

Delehanty commended the cleverness and creativity with which some student organizations conducted their outreach during the campaign.

“The Log Rolling club did a ‘If you donate this much money, I’ll balance on the log for this many minutes with no help,’ and they posted those videos online for donors to see. There were a lot of fun ways for students to get involved and get creative and share their passion and love for their organization,” she said.

President of the Log Rolling Club Angie Como-Mosconi ’25 credited the club’s success to the work of the treasurer, Tyler Hadar ’25. The group primarily relied on sending email reminders to its mailing list of 431 members, all past or present log rollers. The club also kickstarted its Instagram at the beginning of the semester, which it used to spread the word, according to Como-Mosconi.

“We have a couple goals for the upcoming year, including designing merch (we made stickers this semester), tournaments (eventually, hopefully) and rolling gear (like log rolling shoes for people to use),” Como-Mosconi wrote in a message to The Campus. “We

have a great community of rollers, so we knew they’d show their support. Tyler and I are very grateful for everyone involved in the club.”

For next year’s Join the Club fundraiser, Delehanty hopes to provide student organizations with more information and tips about attracting donors earlier on in the year, so they are better prepared come fundraising time.

“I think a more in-depth roll-out on our end would really help the student organizations understand what they are signing up for, and be more prepared to roll out and share the message of their organizations,” she said.

Barrett noted that connecting the SAO with the Office of Advancement was important for the campaign, because it allowed them to view and use the alumni and donor information that the Office of Advancement frequently works with.

“It was wonderful to partner with the SAO and student leaders to help raise funds for their student clubs and organizations. We enjoyed seeing student groups have success through the fundraiser and were glad to support them with guidance on fundraising best practices as well as through digital outreach to Middlebury alumni,” Bartlett wrote in an email to The Campus.

Barrett currently serves alongside Christopher Fridlington ’24 as co-president of the Middlebury Architecture Table, an academically-affiliated student organization that is looking forward to putting the money it received through the campaign to use. Their club received \$400 — meeting 50% of their overall goal — from six donors, according to the “For Every Future” website.

“We’re going to be using the new funding to basically fund additional trips and getting students outside of Middlebury’s campus, and experiencing some of the world-class architecture that this greater region has to offer,” Fridlington told The Campus.

“For us as an organizer, it is going to allow us to probably do several trips next year, or a larger trip and take more people. It’s really exciting,” he said.

# Guest lecture tells the legacy of Black life and art in the Holocaust

By **MAYA ALEXANDER**  
*Contributing Writer*

A recent lecture on “Black Life in a Nazi Internment Camp: The Art of Josef Nassy,” examined the invisibility of the Black wartime experience and highlighted art as a form of memory that helps us better understand Black perspectives of Nazi internment. The April 17 talk was led by Sarah Phillips Casteel, an English professor at Carleton University.

The event was organized by Associate Professor of German Natalie Eppelsheimer with the support of Academic Coordinator Danielle Denis and was co-sponsored by Black Studies, History, History of Art and Architecture, and International and Global Studies.

“I was very happy about the turnout. I had sent dozens of invitations and email reminders to colleagues and students, but in the busy month of April, one never knows how many people will come to a talk,” Eppelsheimer wrote in an email to The Campus.

Eppelsheimer and Casteel met for an authors’ workshop last fall, which prompted Eppelsheimer to invite Casteel to give a talk at Middlebury about her research and new book, titled “Black Lives under

Nazism: Making History Visible in Literature and Art,” released in February.

Drawing on her book, Casteel discussed how one of the most significant visual documents of the Black experience in Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe is the works of Nassy, a Caribbean artist. During his internment, he created a series of drawings and paintings that depicted Black prisoners’ experiences that written records typically omit. Nassy was, to many people’s surprise, supplied with art materials and used different modes of visual material to relay suffering.

Throughout the talk, Casteel helped the audience understand that Nassy’s work and history might help us rethink definitions of the Holocaust. Nassy was arrested in Europe, but since it was unknown that he was Jewish, he was arrested as an enemy national in German-occupied Belgium. Nassy — who was Black, Surinamese and Jewish — spent the war in an internment camp, not a concentration camp, which is an important historical distinction that is not widely understood. According to Casteel, the term “Holocaust survivor,” conceals the diversity of the experiences it seeks to represent and assumes a single narrative.

Not only is the Black experience in internment and concentration camps unrecognized, Casteel

said, but the Allies deliberately removed Black soldiers from their war victory narratives. Casteel used this point to illustrate how European forces — whether they were German or not — believed maintaining white hierarchy was crucial. Black prisoners of war were put in a complex situation where they were not necessarily better off outside of Germany.

Kate Lawson ’26.5 was particularly captivated by this point.

“The ones that stayed in the internment camp made the choice that they would rather be in Nazi Germany than have to go back to being subjected to the racism in America that felt worse than their subjection in Germany, so I thought that was important to help us have a better historical understanding and see the ways that Nazi Germany wasn’t just an isolated political event, but it’s really interconnected to the colonial project and racism in the U.S. and abroad,” Lawson said.

Assistant Professor of Black Studies Viola Huang, who also teaches German language courses, attended Casteel’s talk, and believes that Casteel’s work gives a voice to all of the groups who were targeted by the Nazis.

“On the one hand, this reminds us that the suffering of all these marginalized groups at the hand of the Nazis was connected. And on the other hand, studying the specific and unique ways in which

different groups were targeted and treated helps us understand more clearly the ideological contours of Nazi ideology — both of which are also important insights into our present political moment,” Huang wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury’s German Department has been working towards making their courses more intersectional and inclusive. For instance, Eppelsheimer’s course “Colonialism and Racism” considers the experiences of BIPOC people in Germany and its colonies throughout history: under the Weimar Republic, during the Nazi regime and most recently during the German Black Lives Matter movement. Eppelsheimer also teaches “Literary Responses to the Holocaust,” a class in which students engage with a variety of authors, including Afro-German authors who grew up or were young adults during the Nazi regime.

Recently, students have also applied what they have learned to their own work. At the Spring Student Symposium last Friday, students in the German Department presented their research about Mozambican guestworkers in East Germany and the legacy of German colonialism on the Namibian LGBTQIA+ community.

“I think it is wonderful to see that students are interested

in these topics and that they continue to engage with issues related to Germany’s colonial legacies and Black Germany in several research and thesis projects that go beyond the courses they took,” Eppelsheimer wrote.

Not only does the German Department continue to carefully review and re-think German textbooks that do not effectively include the experiences of people of color, but it has also begun to attract a more diverse group of students, including students of color and international students, according to Huang.

The more the German department takes an intersectional approach to their teaching and continues to attract a diverse group of students, the more future engagement in lectures like Casteel’s there will be, according to Eppelsheimer.

“The great feedback I have received from students and colleagues has shown me that we might want to organize [more of] such talks, which bring the neglected, marginalized and/or silenced topics such as Black lives under Nazism and different academic disciplines into conversation more often,” Eppelsheimer wrote.

## Spring Student Symposium launches 17th year with a bang — and a balloon

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during her opening remarks in BiHall’s Great Hall on Friday morning. She also thanked the faculty, moderators, staff and students for presenting their work to the entire community.

“Students share with each other their intellectual passions and discover what inspires their fellow classmates. We celebrate this opportunity every year because we get to learn from an incredible array of research and creative work,” Patton said.

One such presenter was Nick Dahlen ’24, who gave an oral presentation entitled “Contemporary Arabic Poetry: Challenges in Translation.” Dahlen’s presentation highlighted the work he has done for his senior project in the Arabic Department with Surdna Professor of Linguistics and Arabic Usama Soltan. He translated a selection of poetry from a diwan, the Arabic term for a collection of poetry, entitled “Shuhuud Gaza,” or “Witnesses of Gaza,” by Jordanian poet Abdullah Amini Abu Shmais.

Dahlen interviewed the poet for a literature class he was taking while studying abroad in Jordan last fall, and focused his presentation on the difficulties of translating the work.

“There was certainly some ambiguity in his poetry, and I enjoyed bringing my translations to my advisor and working through questions and challenges in the translation process,” he wrote in a message to The Campus.

He added that he enjoyed the opportunity to share this work with his friends and peers.

Earlier in the day during the first poster session of the symposium, Natalie Eddy ’24 presented her senior economics thesis, “Climate Change Beliefs and Fertility Expectations.” Together with her advisers, Eddy is running a survey on the effect of sharing information about climate change on the number of children respondents plan to have.

“I tried to present my information like I was telling a story, logically moving from the motivation for the work into how we are exploring our research question and then into the results we have already found and what we plan to find in the future,” Eddy

wrote in a message to The Campus.

Planning these and hundreds of other presentations at the symposium involves a lot of moving pieces, according to Morsman. She credited Jill Strube and Colleen Norden in the CTLR and Cathy Ekstrom in BiHall, among others, who make the symposium run smoothly each year.

Ekstrom, program coordinator for sciences and technical support in BiHall, has been involved with the symposium since it began 17 years ago. She is responsible for the posters, while Norden coordinates the timing of presentations.

“It is probably the busiest week of my year,” Ekstrom said in an interview with The Campus, though

Even students who were busy presenting that day took the opportunity to learn from their peers and see what their friends were up to.

“I spent the morning bouncing from one presentation to another, learning about indigenous water rights, magnets and machine learning, economics in the airline industry, and the significance of bread in Egypt,” Dahlen wrote. “Being able to learn about so many new topics from other students is definitely my favorite part of [the] symposium.”

Eddy agreed, stating that her favorite part of the symposium was learning about all of the interesting work her friends were doing.

and released to study phenomena that occur at high altitudes, Suit described.

“These balloons are designed to go up to the stratosphere and our type of balloon usually goes between 85,000 to 115,000 feet. Our balloon got up to around 94,000 feet and its maximum ascent rate was 25.9 mph and maximum descent rate was 121 mph,” Suit wrote in an email to The Campus.

The physics department will use the information from the launch to analyze the data from muons, which are a heavier version of atoms of sorts. They hope that the data will help them analyze the relationship between altitude and number of muons to test Einstein’s

the symposium.

“People got the chance to be involved in a variety of tasks including designing experiments, setting up the balloon launch both the day before and the day of, and recovering the balloon after it landed,” Suit wrote.

Planning the launch involved a lot of logistics, including timing and building muon detectors. Suit connected with a group at Georgia State University, who teamed up with Middlebury by lending their detectors for the launch.

Where the balloon ends up is largely influenced by weather conditions. At one point it was projected to land just over the Canadian border, but in the end it landed in Chelsea, Vt., about a 50 minute drive from campus.

“The balloon was stuck in a tree when the recovery team got there, but it was low enough that they could reach for it to get it down,” Suit explained, adding that the balloon had popped as intended and was disposed of after the launch.

“It was really exciting to be a part of and spring symposium was a perfect time to do it so that we can share this experience with the student body,” Suit wrote.

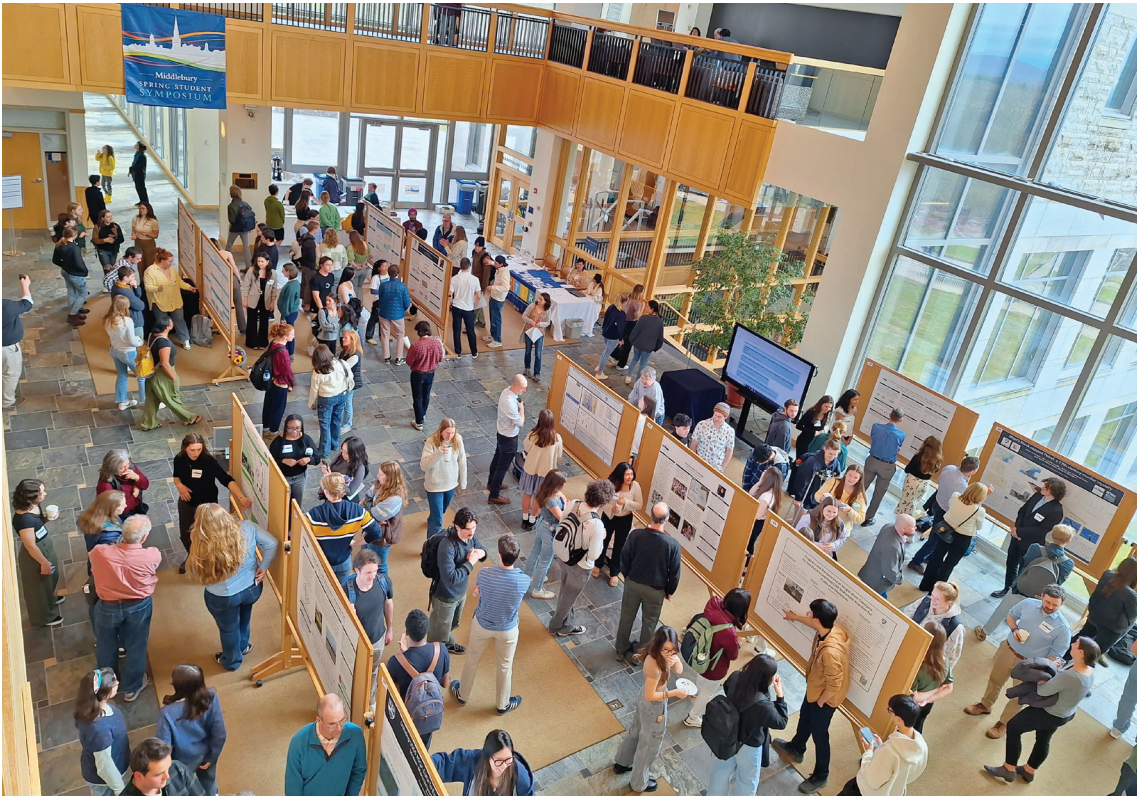
Whether they stood outside BiHall, craning their necks to see the balloon launch, or presented data on topics ranging from droughts in Colorado to teen pregnancy, it was the students who formed the core of the spring symposium. Even though many seniors were presenting their theses, the symposium is open to all students who have research to share.

“We want first-years, sophomores, and juniors to get involved!” Sheridan wrote.

Morsman also appreciated seeing first-time student presenters, especially underclassmen.

“The look on their face when they really get into their presentation and when the clapping begins is priceless,” she wrote.

*Editor’s note: Managing Editor Ryan McElroy ’25 contributed reporting.*



COURTESY PHOTO / COLLEEN NORDEN

245 students presented at the 17th Spring Symposium.

she acknowledged that this is not entirely due to the symposium, as it is also a very busy time of the semester.

“Part of our goal is to make it as diverse as possible,” Ekstrom said. “We try to not put all of humanities or biology together.”

The organizers hoped to spark students’ interest by grouping diverse topics of talks and including posters from a range of subjects in the same poster session, encouraging them to walk around and see a diverse array of projects.

“I hear about it on a day to day basis but especially with science research I get a little lost in the details, so seeing the information presented really ties everything together,” she wrote.

In addition to poster and oral presentations, this year’s symposium featured a high altitude balloon launch for the first time at Middlebury, according to Ellie Suit ’24, who helped organize the launch. In such a launch, a balloon is filled up with hydrogen or helium — in this case it was hydrogen —

theory of special relativity, which posits that time slows down as objects approach the speed of light.

The launch was in collaboration with Georgia State University and the company Launch With Us. Physics Professor Noah Graham met with John Garesché, the chief balloonier of company Launch With Us, who is also the parent of a Middlebury student, in the fall of 2023 to plan the launch. The balloon involved student participation at every stage of the process, making it a perfect fit for

# HAYMAKER BUN COMPANY TO OPEN SECOND LOCATION IN BURLINGTON

By JULIA PEPPER  
Senior Local Editor

Haymaker Bun Company, a Middlebury favorite and a former semifinalist for a James Beard Foundation Award for “Outstanding Bakery” is expanding to Burlington.

The new Haymaker location will occupy the space recently vacated by Tomgirl Kitchen in The Soda Plant — a building on Pine Street in downtown Burlington home to about 40 local businesses and artists.

“The opportunity to expand into the new space at Pine Street was a surprise,” owner of Haymaker Bun Company Caroline Corrente and Manager Chloe Speyers wrote in an email to The Campus. “While the hope to expand our business has always been on the horizon, we were waiting for the right avenue forward.”

Corrente and Speyers explained that they learned about the opening in the Soda Plant from Magda and Nate Van Dusen, the owners of Burlington-based Brio Coffeeworks. Magda and Nate connected Corrente with the owner of the Soda Plant, Steve Conant.

Haymaker features Brio Coffeeworks coffee at its Middlebury location, and Brio currently has a space in the Soda Plant.

Haymaker is known for its menu of uniquely flavored sweet and savory buns, as well as specialty coffee drinks, teas and a rotating lunch menu. The Middlebury location serves as a gathering place for students, town residents and out-of-towners, alike.

“Being part of the community that Haymaker has created will forever be the best part of this work,” Speyers wrote. “We have the opportunity to be the center



On the left, Tim, Barista, then Chloe, Manager, then Bryce, Barista.

COURTESY PHOTO/CHLOE SPEYERS

of so many interactions between our community members & friends.”

Speyers has worked at Haymaker since it originally opened in November 2018.

“I started with Haymaker on day one as a barista and it has been an entirely life changing course that has led me to General Management of both bakeries,” she wrote.

Speyer will now manage both Haymaker locations, expanding her current role as manager and event planner. She anticipates a bit of a learning curve with the expansion to the second location.

“Learning how to have a secondary location in addition to what we already have is a healthy challenge that I think we are ready to take on as a team,” she wrote.

The new location will feature more grab-and-go style food, as well as some classic items like Brioche Buns and Bun Egg

Sandwiches.

Located at 266 and 270 Pine Street in Burlington, the Soda Plant was originally a bottling plant for the beverage company Venetian Ginger Ale, dating back to 1910. The buildings were later sold to Coca Cola for a time.

Soon after Coca Cola left the space in 1977, the building became a business incubator with spaces available for rent ranging in size, according to Steve Conant, manager and co-owner of the Soda Plant.

Conant and his wife Margaret Conant have owned and managed the Soda Plant since 2000.

Conant founded the metalworking business Conant Metal & Light Inc. in 1979. After initially renting a building space in the Burlington area, Conant purchased a building near the Soda Plant, and later expanded to also rent a space in the Soda Plant itself.

After renting in the Soda Plant for 10 years, Conant’s business had grown much larger and had become dependent on the plant for some of his customers.

“If I ever lost the lease I would’ve been in trouble, and so I offered to purchase the business complex,” Conant told The Campus.

After a few years, the previous owner of the plant sold the building to Conant, who was the building’s largest tenant at the time in 2000. While adjusting to his new role as owner of the building, Conant reflected on how he could maintain the small entrepreneurial spirit at the Soda Plant that he so loved.

“I always had great memories of those early years, renting a little space, surrounded by little spaces, in incubator spaces down the road. I found myself in an incubator space, and then owning the building,” Conant said.

An opportunity presented itself in 2018: Recycled North, a non-profit, donation-based used-good retailer, outgrew the building. When they moved out, they left 20,000 square feet of the 50,000 square foot complex vacant. Rather renting the now vacant space to a bigger company like a brewery, Conant decided to carve up the space and rent it as 12 individual smaller spaces, giving smaller businesses a place to launch.

“As an entrepreneur, I’ve always believed one’s business should stand on its own and bring value,” Conant said. “My intent was to create an environment in which they could thrive on their own.”

The Soda Plant hosts a variety of events each year, all inspired by its tenants. The space hosts the annual South End Art Hops— a showcase of new artists and businesses that dates back 30 years and attracts over 30,000 people each September, Conant said.

“Many of the businesses that have come since 2018 are by design customer focused, and motivated by the value their brand brings to the market, and interested in pushing it out there,” Conant described.

Other tenants of the plant would have been disappointed if another food-oriented business did not take over Tomgirl’s old space, according to Conant.

Conant described Haymaker as a “perfect fit” for the space, and referenced its frozen buns as a strong business concept.

Speyers expressed her excitement to find new moments of community in Burlington.

“Something about Haymaker that I have always loved is the way people gather in our space — I have seen so many relationships form within our space and it’s so rewarding to have a part in that,” she wrote. “I see us finding ways to be that in Burlington as well!”

# STUDENTS, TOWN RESIDENTS FLOCK TO TRIVIA NIGHT AT THE MARQUIS

By IZZY RONDA  
Contributing Writer

On Thursday nights at 7 p.m., the Middlebury Marquis Theater comes to life. Town residents, Middlebury students and people from neighboring areas come together for trivia night, eager to partake in some friendly competition.

These weekly trivia nights are free to participate for teams of up to six. The theater serves drink specials at the cafe bar and winning teams receive prizes for their trivial aptitude, according to the Marquis website.

The bar and cafe space at the Marquis often begins filling up at around 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays, as enthusiastic trivia-goers scramble to secure optimal seating, according to Arseneau. The event’s growing popularity is reflected by Middlebury students who speak highly of the event.

“My team and I go to trivia almost every Thursday during the off season. It’s one of our favorite traditions and a great way to engage with the community and support local businesses while having a great time,” Sammy Hausman ’25, who plays softball at the college, wrote in an email to The Campus. “Only downside is that it has been so hard to get a table with how popular the event has gotten.”

Trivia night at the Marquis is a time-honored tradition. Big Guys Entertainment owners Pierre Vachon and Vinny

Herbert, have hosted it since 2015.

“We’ve been doing trivia since the early 2000’s, all over. We did shows here in Middlebury in different spots,” Vachon said of Big Guys Entertainment.

Vachon described how all of their trivia questions are “individually made,” and authentic to Big Guys Entertainment, created without the use of pre-produced trivia, media or videos.

“We joke about it all the time because I never know what’s going to happen when I start doing trivia one night,” Vachon told The Campus.

Vachon said he and Herbert aim to make the event inclusive to as many attendees as possible. His general rule of thumb is that sixty percent of the audience should be able to answer most of the questions he generates.

“I want to make it more fun than so challenging that you feel inadequate when you leave. I don’t want anyone to feel like, ‘Oh man, we’re losers’,” Vachon said.

Vachon added that he enjoys crafting a broad range of questions for his audience so that people of all ages can enjoy, including kids. He aims for the weekly event to serve as a space where everyone can have fun and interact lightheartedly with one another.

The night has both a regular local crowd and a regular student crowd, who come together within the space for some community and competition.

“It’s a very inclusive



The Middlebury Marquis Theatre hosts trivia every Thursday night for eager students and local residents.

EMILY HOGAN/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

environment and honestly very competitive,” Emily Strasburg ’25 wrote in an email to The Campus. “The local Middlebury attendees are avid trivia members, so the few times that I have gone it has always been a run for the money.”

Vachon moved to Middlebury sixteen years ago following the end of his 25 year career as a professional wrestler. He now owns Frog Alley Tattoo and Body Piercing on Bakery Lane in downtown Middlebury, along with the DJ company Big Guys Entertainment.

The tradition dates back to a time before current general manager Justin Arseneau joined the theater’s staff in 2016.

Arseneau moved to

Middlebury from Manchester, N.H., following his deployment in the army, and became involved with the Marquis as a beer representative for the theater while working as a wine and beer sales representative for Vermont-based Baker Distributing.

About a year after his initial introduction to the theater as a beer representative, Arseneau joined the Marquis staff in the fall of 2016. Arseneau would occasionally bartend for trivia nights when he first came on board, but nowadays as general manager, he tries to steer clear of the crowds.

“Trivia’s so busy that I’m usually not there for it because I’m just in the way, I’m just

another body taking up a seat,” Arseneau told The Campus.

The Marquis is currently closed for renovations as the facade of the building is under construction. Arseneau said the interior of the theater will remain unchanged, and trivia night is set to return on May 2.

Both Arseneau and Vachon expressed excitement at getting back to hosting trivia night following the month-long construction-induced hiatus.

“We try to make the Marquis a very entertainment-centric place, and we are looking forward to getting back to that,” Vachon said.

# Middlebury rallies around Royal Oak to raise over \$30,000 in GoFundMe campaign

By **OLIVIA MUELLER**  
*News Editor*

In a true demonstration of the power of community support, a GoFundMe page for Royal Oak Coffee has raised over \$30,000 since it was created last week. The page’s current goal is to raise \$60,000 “to help Royal Oak Coffee overcome a devastating financial hit,” according to the website description.

Royal Oak Coffee owners Matt and Alessandra Delia-Lobo created the page to raise money as they try to fix flood damage in their business and home, navigate financial challenges in tax payments and prepare for the upcoming birth of their second child.

The couple founded Royal Oak Coffee in late 2018. Located on Seymour Street in the town of Middlebury, Royal Oak features Vivid Coffee Roasters products, along with a rotating selection of other coffee roasters and some pastries. They used to have a second location called the Lost Monarch Coffee Bar, located in the Stone Mill, which closed in January 2023.

Creating the fundraising page and reaching out for help felt vulnerable, Matt Delia-Lobo said. Before the GoFundMe, the couple had entirely self-funded the Royal Oak operation.

“Usually, we just get there, but at this point, we were just like, ‘I don’t think we can scrape by on this one,’” Matt Delia-Lobo said. “It was like one thing after another since Covid, but I mean, the flooding was really the last straw.”

The couple originally

decided to work with a local financial professional on business development and personal finances so they could meet face-to-face, but the pandemic made this difficult. It became increasingly challenging to communicate with their advisor during this period, Matt explained.

“We were just on our own and then and then we were like waiting, you know, for any correspondence at all,” he said. “It was super hard to navigate.”

Then, the couple’s financial advisor abruptly retired, and the couple struggled to navigate their finances, resulting in mispayments that eliminated opportunities to qualify for tax credits and federal relief programs.

“When your taxes are messed up, you’re not eligible for anything. You have to jump through so many hoops to maybe get some help,” Matt said.

During this period, Royal Oak missed out on a federal employee retention tax credit, flood repairs for the shop and other federal programs. On a personal level, the couple were not able to capitalize on programs that would have helped with flood repair for their own home and childcare subsidies.

Matt expressed appreciation for the outpouring of support he and his wife have received since launching the fundraiser. He recalled a moment last week, following the fundraiser launch, where he ran into a donor at the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-Op, who is a small business owner, too.

“I saw him. He was like, ‘Yeah, you belong here,’” Matt said. “To just tell someone, like, flat out, ‘You belong

here,’ it’s pretty rare. I don’t think anyone’s ever told me that before.”

Matt also described his gratitude for the uniquely close-knit community in Middlebury.

“I’ve always tried to be very outspoken about the potential that I see in Middlebury for greatness and for things to be amazing and then this just kind of made me realize that I think people see us as a display of that potential,” he said.

Despite the limited number of seats in the Seymour Street space, Royal Oak has transformed into a community gathering place. The couple envisioned Royal Oak as simply an espresso bar when they initially opened, but quickly realized the potential residents saw in the coffee shop as a place to come together.

“It was immediately apparent that we were like, ‘oh, this will be a community space,’” Matt said.

Middlebury students have an affinity for the coffee shop. Natalie Penna ’24 considers it her favorite work environment because of the friendly staff and great playlist.

Sophia Butler-Rahman ’25 expressed appreciation for the effort Royal Oak makes to experiment with different cultures in their coffee.

“Looking at the specials board and seeing a ma’amoul and coquito latte and feeling represented being part Arab and part Puerto Rican. I texted a pic to my mom and it made her day to know at some coffee shop in my small college town, they represented our cultures through coffee,” Butler-Rahman said.

Beyond the physical shop, Sophia Giliberto ’24 values the



OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*In a show of community support, a GoFundMe page for Royal Oak Coffee created last week has raised over \$30,000 since it was created last week. Their current goal is to raise \$60,000.*

Delia-Lobos’ engagement with the community and attention to detail in coffee, which she witnessed at a MiddSciCafe event Matt led.

“I knew their coffee was next-level, but that workshop really proved the amount of meticulous detail and care that goes into every cup,” Giliberto wrote.

The \$30,000 the couple has raised so far, which met their initial fundraising goal, will be enough for the couple to stabilize Royal Oak. The GoFundMe increased their goal to \$60,000, which would allow the couple to continue expanding their commitment to the community, Matt said.

“We’re going to try to do everything we can, just more for the community because that’s what they’ve told

us — that it’s important to everybody,” Delia-Lobos said.

Five years in, the Delia-Lobos are more committed than ever to staying open and continuing to serve the Middlebury community.

“The main takeaway from the whole thing is like, it’s kind of like letting go of any kind of shame or pride or whatever. And just accepting that Vermont relies on the symbiosis of like all of the businesses and the people,” he said.

Matt described his coffee shop as the most important thing to him other than his family, making the outpouring of community support all the more gratifying.

“I think it just shows the resilience that we can have here,” he added.

# VERMONT FLANNEL COMPANY ACQUIRES VERMONT TEDDY BEAR

By **KATRINA SCHWARZ**  
*Local Editor*

How could Vermont Teddy Bear get even more Vermont?

Put it in a flannel shirt.

The Ohio-based ownership group of Vermont Flannel, USA Brands, announced on April 9 that it had acquired Vermont Teddy Bear. Vermont Teddy Bear simultaneously sold its apparel divisions, which include a variety of clothing products, to an affiliate of New York City-based investment firm Lionel Capital.

With the merger, the two companies will continue to function as separate brands, but will come together to expand on one another’s products, according to the Vermont Flannel’s announcement. The companies already collaborated on two products this past year, including a version of Vermont Teddy Bear’s classic 15” teddy bear wearing a Vermont Flannel shirt, the press release stated.

The Vermont Flannel Company is a Vermont-based company that produces flannel products including pajamas, shirts and accessories. The company currently has six stores in Vermont — Ferrisburgh, Burlington, Woodstock, East Barre, Johnson and Manchester — two of which house house production facilities, as well. They also have two stores in Maine, and plan to open a new store in Waterbury, Vt. this coming summer, according to VTDigger.

One of the country’s biggest



teddy bear manufacturers, Vermont Teddy Bear does most of its production in Shelburne, Vt. Shelburne also serves as the location of the Vermont Teddy Bear flagship retail store, where the company’s products are sold. Founded in 1981, Vermont Teddy Bear produces bears that are insured for life and are stuffed with recyclable materials, according to its website.

The acquisition of Vermont

Teddy Bear by USA Brands had been in the works for a couple of months, and closed on April 4, USA Brand President Matt Bigelow told VTDigger.

“We’re really excited to have another company that supports domestic manufacturing,” Bigelow told VTDigger.

Between the two companies, USA Brands now has 70 full-time employees in the state of Vermont, according to VTDigger.

Bigelow also told VTDigger that there are no planned layoffs, and both Vermont Flannel Company and Vermont Teddy Bear will continue to operate as standalone brands.

One change, however, is the planned departure of Bill Shouldice, now-former CEO of Vermont Teddy Bear. Shouldice will stay on in an advisory role to help with the transition as Joe Van Deman, CEO of USA Brands, becomes the principle

decision maker for Vermont Teddy Bear, VTDigger reported.

The Campus was unable to reach a representative from Vermont Flannel Company, Vermont Teddy Bear or USA Brands for comment.

Lindsay Kurrle, commissioner of the Vermont state Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shared in a press conference on April 10 that she spoke to Van Deman about layoffs.

“At this point there was no news of layoffs or plans to pull out of Vermont,” Kurrle said at the press conference, according to VTDigger.

Shouldice shared his excitement about bringing two prominent Vermont brands together in a press release on Vermont Teddy Bear’s website.

“Both companies have a rich history of creating warmth, comfort and wonderful memories for locals and visitors to Vermont alike. It makes so much sense for the next chapter of Vermont Teddy bear,” he said.

The collaboration between Vermont Teddy Bear and Vermont Flannel marks a new chapter for the two organizations, both of which have represented the state of Vermont for decades.

“You can’t come to Vermont without stopping at the Vermont Teddy Bear Factory or taking home a piece of Vermont Flannel with you, and you can’t leave either company’s stores without a warm smile on your face,” Van Deman said in the Vermont Flannel press release.

# SPECS PANTHER COLUMN #5: OUR READING LIST

*SPECS Panther is a mascot for SPECS (sex-positive education for college students) and serves the Middlebury community. As a part of Health & Wellness Education, SPECS Panther seeks to educate and spark independent dialogue, not be the end-all-be-all resource on campus. We encourage Midd kids to break down the walls of silence by engaging in sex-positive conversation — wherever, with whomever, and about whatever is most comfortable, easy and safe for you. Our editions will be fun and educational!*

## Op-Ed

*Zoe Gregg is a member of the class of 2026 and is a SPECS Peer Educator.*

SPECS Panther is back and better than ever, this time providing you with a short and sweet reading list. From self-pleasure and communication to gender politics and activism, the following collection of books covers a wide range of pressing and relevant topics that structure our lives.

**“Come Together: The Science (and Art!) of Creating Lasting Sexual Connections” by Emily Nagoski**

Written by one of SPECS’ favorite educators, Emily Nagoski, “Come Together” explores the science behind creating lasting sexual connections. By highlighting communication, breaking down “gendered” beliefs about pleasure and asking tough questions, Nagoski challenges misunderstood topics about sex in long-term, monogamous relationships. Interested in other things by

Nagoski? Check out “Come As You Are,” where she explores the modern economy of pleasure and provides information regarding vulvas and responses to stimuli. Or check out “Burnout,” which dives into the stress cycle and how to get out of it.

**“Sex for One: The Joy of Selfloving” by Betty Dodson**

“Sex for One: The Joy of Selfloving,” explores the taboo world of masturbation. While including masturbation tips and tricks, the book focuses on how it is a form of self-love and can allow one to get to know themselves (and what they like) better. Dodson provides practical advice, techniques and anecdotes to aid readers on

their journey of self-discovery and self-pleasure.

**“Pleasure Activism” by adrienne maree brown**

Aiming to challenge the way we view activism, brown investigates how pleasure can be directly related to activism as well as revolutionizing the way the world views advocacy. This collection of essays draws from other revolutionary Black feminists such as Audre Lorde and Sonya Renee Taylor in order to provide a well-rounded, yet deeply nuanced approach to the politics of self-pleasure and self-love. From climate change to gender politics, Brown constructs new narratives about pressing socio-political matters to help readers build a better understanding of themselves

and their relationship to personal pleasure.

**“The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love” by Sonya Renee Taylor**

Through a radical self-love approach, Taylor works to dismantle the harsh narratives surrounding bodies, true self-love and pleasure. Taylor believes that inequity, oppression and injustice are manifestations of our inability to make peace with our bodies. Thus, she urges individuals to take personal action and embrace radical self-love, which extends to the community through radical human love and interpersonal connection.

**“The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability” by Miriam Kaufman, Cory Silverberg and Fran Odette**

Written by a doctor, a sex educator and a disability activist, “The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability” aims to address how to navigate sex with varying types of disabilities. The authors cover both breadth and depth, going into various chronic pain symptoms and physical disabilities, providing information regarding pain management, communication and masturbation tips, and scientific analysis of stress mitigation and pleasure.

**“How to Understand Your Gender” by Alex Iantaffi and Meg-John Barker**

This book explores gender diversity in all its forms. Looking through the lenses of sociology, biology, and history, “How to Understand Your Gender” is a casual yet informative guide that discusses gender diversity and how gender and sexuality interact with our daily lives. Iantaffi and Barker describe ways people can express their gender, explore identities and understand those whose gender identification may be different from their own.



# STUDENTS NEED TO SUPPORT THE ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY RENOVATION BOND VOTE

## Op-Ed

*Macy Daggitt is a member of the class of 2025. Mohamed Noor is a member of the class of 2027. Andrew Mueller and Gavin Gattuso are members of the class of 2024.*

The public library in town may be undergoing a dramatic change soon that college students should check out.

The Ilsley Public Library has been a cornerstone of the Middlebury community for a century. It’s time the town of Middlebury gives back to the library for all it has done — serving as a public gathering space and providing resources for the town — by passing a bond to fund its expansion and improvement.

Raising awareness and support for the project on campus is crucial to the library.

Students who are registered to vote in the town of Middlebury should turn out on May 7 and vote in favor of the initiative, and those who are not registered but are interested in helping can spread the word! On May 4, there will be a pop-up event outside of Davis Family Library where students who are collaborating with the library to raise awareness about the vote will be answering questions and promoting the initiative to other students.

The Ilsley Public Library expansion is essential for the town of Middlebury. The demand for utilities and repairs of the facility is continually growing, making operations increasingly costly. Since the founding of the Library Study Committee in 2017, a plan for improving the library has been in the works, and this spring, the town of Middlebury has the opportunity to finally make this vision a reality.

The town of Middlebury is having a special election on

May 7 to determine whether or not to approve a \$4.5 million dollar municipal bond to fund the expansion and renovations of the library. While the total project cost is \$17 million, a combination of private fundraising, grants, and government funds will cover \$12.5 million of that cost. The bond is the final step to ensure that the renovations occur.

If the vote passes to fully fund the initiative, the library will undergo a transformation that will expand its facilities and programming, making it able to reach and serve more areas of the Middlebury community. Plans for the library outline a plethora of exciting additions for the town to use, including an expanded space for children, new conference and meeting rooms, additional study spaces, an outdoor gathering space and roof garden and more. New facilities will transform the old building into a perfect space for the entire community to enjoy.

The renovated library will

be able to offer more engaging programs for the community. While the library already serves the community by hosting art workshops, writers’ groups, film festivals, educational presentations and children’s activities, an updated library will provide an improved gathering space, as the current one is not fulfilling the standards the library staff aims to uphold. With the expansion, the library can further enhance its position as a destination downtown, a place for hosting exhibitions, performances and cultural events for the people of Middlebury.

Middlebury students will benefit, too. Despite having two great research libraries on campus, students will find that the Ilsley Public Library can be a resource for them as well. For years, the library has fostered a positive relationship with the college, including employing college students, providing a venue for students and professors to access resources

and present research, and collaborating with a number of Middlebury courses as a community partner.

Furthermore, while the building is under construction for 18 months, the National Bank of Middlebury, located just down the street from the library, has offered up one of its floors to temporarily serve as the library, so patrons can still access all its resources. If the community votes to pass the bond and fully fund the expansion, the project will break ground in the spring of 2025, and is expected to be complete in the summer of 2026.

Voting will take place at 77 Main Street, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on May 7. We urge all students who are registered to vote in the town of Middlebury to vote in support of the bond, to assist the Ilsley Public Library in embarking on a new chapter. The local community and students on campus will greatly benefit if the proposed expansion passes.



The view from Main Street of the proposed design for expanding the Ilsley Public Library.

COURTESY PHOTO/ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

# ADDRESSING RECENT VANDALISM AT THE KNOLL

## Op-Ed

*Sheila Camacho is a member of the class of 2025. Caitlin Sheen is a member of the class of 2026.5*

The Knoll is a place to slow down. At Middlebury, life is constantly moving a hundred miles an hour. For many students, it is a place to breathe and step back. As Knoll interns, we have a lot of love for the space, and as such, it makes us incredibly sad to learn of the vandalism at the end of March. We understand that people make mistakes and get careless, but we do implore the community to respect all our shared spaces, including but not limited to the Knoll.

We are choosing not to dwell on this incident, but rather focus on the good things that come with spring: the greenery, the planting season and the return of our volunteers. That being said, we would like to have a conversation with those who disrespected the space. The damage was not insignificant, and we are fundraising to address it. Moving forward, we ask that the community shows the Knoll — and every place on campus — the respect it deserves.

It seems as though folks on campus believe the Knoll burned down; to clarify, this was not the case. There was an unauthorized campfire, and

some of the Knoll’s property was burned. Major damages included an Adirondack chair, one of our garden carts and some missing pieces of larger Knoll Projects; the fire also grew beyond our designated fire pit. We are grateful that nobody was injured but still feel devastated to see the impacts.

This is not our first experience with unauthorized campfires at the Knoll. We understand that the process of acquiring a burn permit can take time and coordination, like all meaningful work. It’s absolutely crucial, however, to take safety precautions and communicate with the Knoll Team before such a fire takes place by registering the event with us at [go/knollevents/](https://go.knollevents/). This has become increasingly important in recent historic drought years in Vermont,

which bring heightened fire risk. As we transition to spring, much of our equipment is in need of some love and attention.

We also want to state that alcohol is prohibited at the Knoll, and we are concerned about the safety of the students who may be driving or walking back to campus, particularly along Vermont Route 125 (we ask that students walk past Ridgeline, rather than along the road; the recommended path is available at [go/knoll/](https://go.knoll/)). The speed limit along the road there is quite high, drivers are going fast, and there is very little shoulder for students to walk on.

The photo included with this piece is another example of student vandalism and an unauthorized fire that occurred this past summer. Summer interns at the Knoll are great

students who work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. sowing seeds, growing and harvesting. It’s a devastating feeling to come down to the garden only to see a mess and disrespect of a place we care so deeply about.

The Knoll leadership crew understands that this was not done with malicious intent. To us, however, this is a matter of respect for the land and our spaces on campus. The Knoll is supported by a crew that works to keep the space tidy and for all to enjoy. As a community space, as with all spaces on campus, we hope that you all feel a sense of responsibility to leave it better than you found it.

The Knoll is a gathering place. Within open volunteer hours, we attract a diverse group of students who seek out the garden for many reasons. Each year, we host around 180 volunteers and we are so grateful for the many hands to help our collective work. Our work is student-led and volunteer guided, stretching back to 2003. A number of staff, faculty, and community members are deeply connected to and cherish the garden, including Associate Director of the Knoll Megan Brakeley ’06. Outside of hours, students frequently walk to the Knoll, gather for picnics in the springtime, and run on the TAM. We have put love and care into this space, and we are so happy to share it.



COURTESY PHOTO

*This is not the first time the Knoll was vandalized. Pictured above is a photo from July 17, 2023.*

# What are Middlebury students “fluent” in, anyways?

## Editorial

*The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.*

The newly launched Middlebury website now features what the college has labeled as the “Four Fluencies”: “Solving the Climate Crisis,” “Analyzing Data,” “Transforming Conflict” and “Understanding Cultural Difference. If you are surprised to hear that these are the four pillars of a Middlebury education, so were we when perusing the Middlebury website.

After an hour of debating the usefulness of these categories, and what we would consider replacing the more objectionable ones with, we’ve come to the conclusion that these vaguely corporatized categories do not reflect the reality of a Middlebury education. Rather, such labels of the four fluencies represent wishful thinking of the PR team, not the reality of the Middlebury experience.

Let’s discuss the odd one out: data analysis sticks out amongst its globally ambitious peers that are awkwardly grouped together. How do excel spreadsheets and regression models compare to the high-minded values of the Conflict Transformation Collaborative or the importance of intercultural connections? The four fluencies are flawed because they omit key details, which strikes us as proof that this label was meant to inspire donors, rather than reflect the four years students spend immersed in the liberal arts education here.

Amidst this spectacle on the college homepage, behind the scenes is a more valuable debate happening regarding the academic future of the college. The Faculty Council and Student Government Association are debating critical resolutions about the number of credits required to graduate and updating the

distributional requirements, but taking the four fluencies at their word silences the necessary discourse around our education. We call for Middlebury to do away with the superfluous language and tackle the debate head-on: How can we retain the core of a Middlebury education while preparing students to enter a modern world that makes new demands of us?

Faculty have expressed concerns with the four fluencies, and the disconnect between the fluencies and the distribution requirements currently in place. At a recent Faculty Council meeting, professors discussed the need for updates to the distribution requirements, which were implemented over 30 years ago. If the fluencies are to be retained as institutional goals — which many faculty expressed concerns about — some faculty proposed adjusting distribution requirements to be thematic, exploring topics such as AI, climate change and social justice, across academic departments.

Faculty are the backbone of the academic experience at Middlebury, and they were not even consulted before the fluencies were added to the college website last year. To us, this shows how the college saw the four fluencies as a way to market their fancy program

titles more so than a reflection of the true learning experience at Middlebury.

One key example of the disconnect is in looking at what is missing from the four fluencies. For instance, there is no mention of developing students’ writing skills (okay, sure, maybe we are a little bit biased over here). But there are two college writing credits in the distribution requirements, and an overwhelming emphasis on improving writing skills within academic departments. Yet, the only traditional academic subject promoted is data analysis — something many humanities majors are likely never to encounter in a meaningful way, as they are even able to skip the deductive reasoning requirement if they choose. Could this be part of the war on humanities? Does the college advocate for data because it gives them more money?

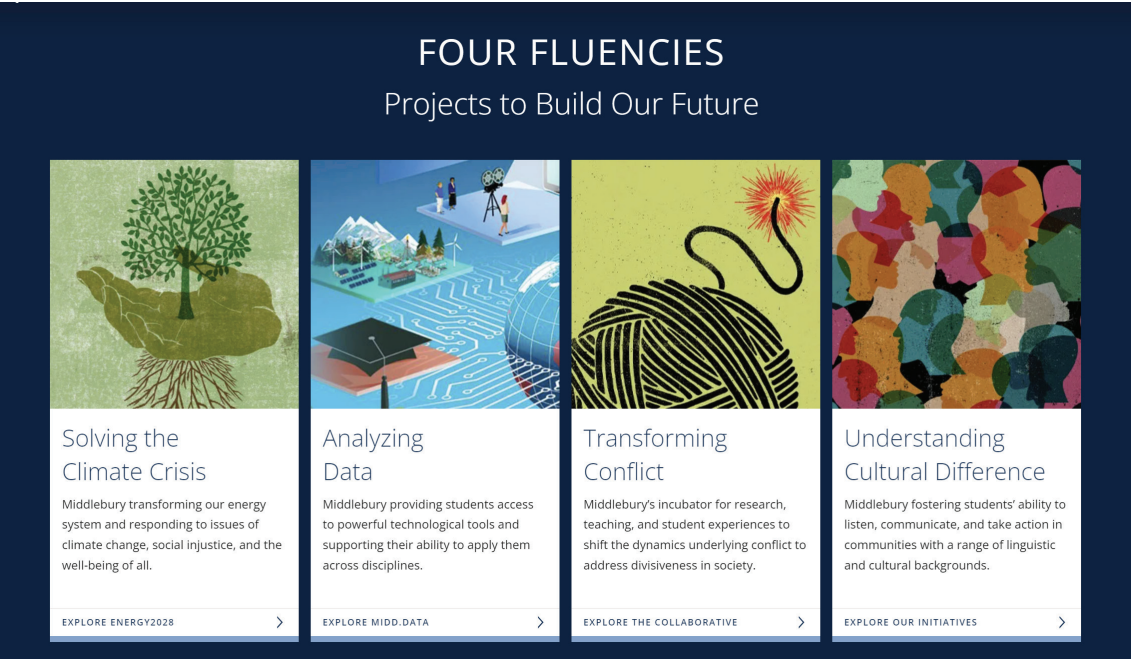
For all this talk about fluency, there is no mention of fluency in foreign languages, despite it being the college’s claim to fame. The glossy new college website proudly touts the so-called “Big M” — the Vermont campus, Middlebury Institute of International Studies, Middlebury Language Schools, Middlebury C.V. Starr Schools Abroad and the Bread Loaf School of English — but foreign languages are

included nowhere in the college’s learning goals. This disconnect makes it feel as though Middlebury cares about its language programs and study abroad programs insofar as it makes money off of them, but not to actually develop its students’ skills in those areas.

Four fluencies will probably always leave some things out, but maybe that is the problem with this premise. How can a liberal arts school with claims of a robust, well-rounded education be boiled down into four pillars?

If the college wants to promote its academic standing, let’s be honest about the reality of our learning here. No one is coming to Middlebury with the express goal of studying conflict transformation, and we are unlikely bang our Gamaliel Painter canes and walk out of commencement with the tools to solve climate change once and for all.

Instead of the pomp and circumstance, we should refocus our efforts on the structures that define our Middlebury education — the language focus, adding new distribution requirements and rethinking the number of credits needed to graduate. We only have four years here — can you imagine if we had to devote all that time to the four fluencies?



COURTESY PHOTO

*Middlebury.edu prominently displays the so-called “Four Fluencies” as crucial to our education.*

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The Middlebury Campus

# Evolution Dance Crew hosts its 10th birthday party

Continued from Page 1

Philippines and dancing to Bruno Mars at parties. The dance featured a medley of songs by the artist with dancers wearing bright yellow and maroon. Audience members picked up on the dancers’ enthusiasm. “It was breathtaking — the effort, dedication, and the sheer joy from every member. Truly wonderful,” audience member Olivia Oehrle ’24 wrote in a message to The Campus. The screaming cheers of the crowd confirmed that one highlight of the night was a piece playfully entitled “Girl Dinner.” Choreographed by three seniors, Ella Bode ’24, Amelia Grosskopf ’24 and Brenda Ramirez ’24, the heels number was an empowered celebration of female sexuality set to feel-good songs by female singers. Towards the end of the show, Naja Irvin-Conyers ’24 and Brian Mejia ’24 choreographed “My House,” a celebratory piece about community, featuring colorful costumes. “I wanted something that showed Evolution the community and confidence it has given me over my time in Evolution and I believe that it was accomplished,” Irvin-Conyers wrote in a message to The Campus. Beyond performing, Evolution Dance Crew is an important space to build community. Evolution was formed by a group of students of color led by Diku Rogers ’16, who felt excluded from the Middlebury dance scene in January 2014. “Middlebury is hard, especially coming from a big city surrounded by my people and culture to a small town,” Irvin-Conyers wrote. “At times it feels hard to even continue, but Evo has been a space where I could creatively express myself

as well as find my home. It’s a family where you are supported and cared for.” Saines added that Evo feels like a family. “Seeing my dancers get excited about learning Hula and watching other Evo members practicing our movements during rehearsals made me incredibly grateful to be a part of this community,” she wrote in a message to The Campus. The night finished off with a dance entitled “What doesn’t kill you makes you ...”, a high-energy piece choreographed by Malia Rutherford ’26. Each dancer sported a different colorful spring attire. The piece started off with a line of dancers looping around the stage like a mechanical cog, alternating crouching or springing upright to create varied heights and levels. Overall, Evo’s birthday was a captivating celebration of joy, featuring hip hop, Korean pop, Caribbean merengue, and Latin beats. “I always love going to the dance troupe showcases, but this one was particularly impactful,” audience member Lucy Curtis-Cherry ’26.5 wrote. “I think it was because the choreographers incorporated childhood memories and you could clearly see the connection to the story they were telling.” What’s in store for Evolution’s next trip around the sun? “I see the future of Evolution ‘evolving’ in the way(s) that the crew builds community on campus through public dance workshops, further collaboration with other student organizations on campus, and even extending our outreach to communities outside Middlebury,” Canonigo wrote. Well, we simply can’t wait for their next birthday.

# “DON’T FORGET ME” IS UNFORGETTABLE

By CHARLIE KEOHANE  
Editor at Large

“Don’t Forget Me,” Maggie Rogers’ junior album finds the singer-songwriter moving in a clearer direction than ever, with songs that feel particularly apt for a graduating senior. Composed of just ten tracks, “Don’t Forget Me” is an intimate and introspective album that showcases Rogers’ range and songwriting talent. Rogers rose to fame as a New York University senior when Pharrell Williams gave her song “Alaska” no notes. Since then, she has released the studio albums “Heard It In a Past Life” (2019) and “Surrender” (2022). Interestingly, Rogers pursues more than music; she graduated with a master’s degree from the Harvard Divinity School in 2022. The titular lead single on the album “Don’t Forget Me,” released Feb. 8, sees the singer grappling with her friends’ life changes as they get married and settle down. Rogers frankly sings, “Love me till your next somebody,” continuing “That when it’s time to leave... Don’t forget me.” Yet, there is a light of optimism: “Maybe I was bitter from the winter all along / Maybe there’s a stranger, standing, holding out / for love, just waiting on the next street / just for me.” The song “Don’t Forget Me” immediately struck a chord and set the stage for the rest of the album, which swims in nostalgia. While my friends are not getting married yet, many of us are on the precipice of leaving a residential college and stepping into a largely unformed future. The song cuts to the anxieties of embarking on different paths. The album as a whole is full of honest emotions and stories that span different phases of life — falling in and out of love, moving on and changing with the years. Rogers, who is nearing her thirtieth birthday, said in an interview with Vogue that she wrote the album “as if they were scene by scene in a movie.”

“There are so many different memories woven into the tapestry of this record, from across the span of my 20s,” Rogers said in the Vogue interview. “I’m turning 30 at the end of April. This record does feel in many ways like this really woven memory blanket of this long span of my life.” One of my immediate favorites from my first listen through the full album is “It Was Coming All Along.” The opening track welcomes listeners to the album with warm guitar strums and a poppy beat, painting the image of someone dealing with anxiety and the closing of chapters. The first verse includes a lyric about the narrator’s mother selling her childhood home. In another, a friend, Nora, calls Rogers and reminds her, “Hold your temper / Hey there, Maggie, slow your roll.” Rogers flexes her creative muscles with songs like “The Kill,” which she recently performed on The Late Show. The song captures the whirlwind push and pull between two lovers, cleverly swapping out the subjects throughout the chorus to flip the perspectives (and making it harder to sing along). I think “The Kill” has the makings to be her next single off the album, following “Don’t Forget Me” and “So Sick of Dreaming.” On her Instagram, Rogers shared that the album was written in a mere

five days and blends memories from her own life and the lives of others. Rogers co-wrote eight of the songs with Ian Fitchuk, and penned “If Now Was Then” and “I Still Do” on her own. At its core, “Don’t Forget Me” is an album shimmering with warmth. The songs feel intimate yet universal. In “If Now Was Then,” another one of my favorites, the narrator struggles with regret and missed connections. The song ends with an apology, a simple repetition of “I’m sorry.” At some points throughout the record, Rogers names her friends and includes interludes of them speaking. Rogers does not have the most powerful voice in the industry; she is not belting, but she captivates listeners with her thoughtful lyrics and sweet, clear melodies. While I’m partial to the album’s more upbeat songs, I’m hopeful that the slower numbers like “I Still Do” and “All The Same” will grow on me with time. As I’m walking around campus, soaking in my last long, blue evenings with college friends, I feel particularly tied to “It Was Coming All Along.” It is comforting to hear Rogers croon, “I’m flying long past 22.” As Rogers closes the door on her twenties, “Don’t Forget Me” assures me that I’m ready to continue walking through them.



COURTESY PHOTO/ MAGGIE ROGERS  
Rogers released her third album, “Don’t Forget Me,” on April 12.

# In deep waters: “Airswimming” dives into life and love in an asylum

By ELLIE TRINKLE  
News Editor

“Airswimming” left the audience with laughter, tears and a whole lot of Doris Day songs stuck in their heads. As I left the Hepburn Zoo last weekend, I wiped away the few tears I had shed (a very rare occurrence for me) and ran to tell my friends that it had been a long time since a piece of art had truly moved me the way this show had. The play ran from April 18–20 and served as the senior thesis in acting for Kristen Morgenstern ’24 and Maggie Blake ’24, the 500 in directing for Elsa Marrian ’25 and the 500 in lighting design for August Siegel ’25. Written by British playwright Charlotte Jones in 1997, “Airswimming” tells the story of an unlikely friendship that forms in the 1920s in St. Dymphna’s Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Dora Kitson (Morgenstern) and Persephone Baker (Blake) navigate how to share a space and cope with their complex pasts and unknown futures throughout the 50 years they spend in St. Dymphna’s. “It’s about friendship. I think that this has been a really hard year for Middlebury and speaking for myself, I can say that I wouldn’t have got through it as well as I have without my friends,” Merrian said. “I think that the show really speaks to the importance of standing by someone no matter what, and standing by someone no matter how crazy of an idea they’re having and just sticking to your friends.” Using parallel timelines, the play alters between scenes set inside and outside of St. Dymphna’s. In the latter scenes, to cope with the effects of their incarceration,

the aging Dora and Persephone take on the alter-egos of the adventurous Dorph, who likes to retell the history of victorious women, and the enthusiastic Porph, who strives to embody Doris Day. When the women aren’t in their fantasy worlds, they are sentenced to polishing duty for an hour each day. This is where their friendship truly develops. Dora, who was institutionalized for acting and dressing like a man (and for smoking Spanish cigars), has been in St. Dymphna’s for two years by the time Persephone arrives. Dora frequently has to comfort Persephone as she grapples with her new home and the reason for her incarceration: bearing a child out of wedlock. As the years wear on, the women grow closer and closer. We watch the withdrawn Dora start to open up and eventually ask for Persephone’s comfort. By the end, the women have aged, but their friendship is stronger than ever. The technical aspects of the performance must be recognized. Despite it being Siegel’s first time designing a lighting-scape by themselves, the lighting was intricate, communicating the complex narrative of the two women and the obscured passage of time. The stage was colored a dreamy pink for Dorph and Porph’s fantastical adventures, and a watery blue for when they embarked on the titular airswimming — Morgenstern and Blake, adorned with floral swimming caps and goggles, had a beautiful sequence in which they freely swam through air. This lighting all contrasted powerfully with the sterile white light of St. Dymphna’s, reemphasizing Dora and Persephone’s confinement. The lighting triumphed towards the latter half of the play, with its vibrant reds that symbolized Dorph’s agony.

Blake initially read “Airswimming” in late September 2023 — three days before her thesis’ preliminary proposal was due — and she immediately knew she wanted to play the character of Persephone for her senior thesis. After consulting Morgenstern, who felt similarly about the character of Dora, the two asked Merrian to be their director. Because the play discusses the mental health system’s failure on women, having the close, all-women team of Blake, Merrian and Morgenstern helped to ensure the issue was treated with care. “It’s been such a positive environment, we all pick up each other’s slack and help each other out,” Morgenstern said. “We’re all really helping each other out and rooting for each other.” The rehearsal process began at the start of the spring semester, around four to five times a week for two hours in the Sunderland basement. The week before the show premiered, the crew permanently relocated to the Hepburn Zoo where everything — costumes, set and lighting — was finally able to come together. One of the challenges the entire crew faced was having to quickly transition to the Hepburn Zoo right after “The Worst Mother In The World” wrapped on Saturday, April 13, a little less than a week before “Airswimming” was set to premiere. After helping the previous crew strike, the “Airswimming” crew was finally able to put together their set and rewire their lighting setup. However, the fast turnaround ultimately proved to be no obstacle, as the sets and costumes were simple yet captivating, and the lighting transitions ran smoothly. Blake and Morgenstern both cited personal challenges in portraying such complex characters.

In order to make sure the Persephone she portrayed honored the real-life Ms. Baker upon whom the character is based, Blake spent a lot of time exploring Persephone’s complexities in order to make her portrayal of Persephone unique. Morgenstern had never played as big a role at Middlebury before, and becoming Dora demanded a lot of hard work. “I’ve maybe had 10 lines ever, so to have to do a whole play where I’m on stage the entire time and tracking a character’s entire trajectory has been really difficult, but fun,” Morgenstern said. Despite these challenges, Blake and Morgenstern personified these women perfectly. Blake sang and danced with energy when Porph embodied Doris Day, and she was raw when Persephone broke down in anxiety. Morgenstern was strong, witty and level-headed both in her line delivery and physicality, using her body as a tool to further highlight Dora’s character. At the end, the audience was awestruck watching Morgenstern de-

liver a devastating and vulnerable monologue. “Airswimming” was special in that each team member’s attentiveness and care was evident, but what was perhaps even more compelling was the way they each commended the entire team’s ability to work together. It was clear that the production brought everyone involved closer together, really contributing to its intimate feel and overall success. “This was such a talented, compassionate, and excited group of people. I couldn’t imagine it any other way,” Blake wrote in an email to The Campus. As the lights turned on and the audience’s applause echoed off the polishing room’s bathtub, one thing was clear: True friendship can withstand even our darkest moments.



CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS  
Blake and Morgenstern performed in “Airswimming” as their senior theses in acting.

# New England at the mic: WRMC presents DJ Lucas and Hotline TNT

By **NORAH KHAN**  
Contributing Writer

WRMC hosted its annual “Sepomana Spring Concert” on Friday, April 19. Held in the Bunker in the Freeman International Center, the concert featured Western Massachusetts artist DJ Lucas and the New York City-based band Hotline TNT.

DJ Lucas started his set off strong, flaunting his red flannel and partly unlaced sperry boots — paying true homage to his New England roots. His meme-like lines kept everybody interested in what he was going to say next. At one point, Lucas dropped the line, “shorty got thick skin like she went through rigamortis,” which was lyrical ingenuity at its finest.

The last song he played, “The Climb,” came when the crowd felt like it had hit peak energy, with people jumping and nodding along to the comical lyrics. One of Lucas’ crew members even came into the audience and boosted the audience’s energy to close out the set perfectly.

Afterward, Hotline TNT came on stage to play part of their discography, including songs from their newest album, “Cartwheel,” which has been gaining traction since its release in November 2023. They laid out sheets of buzzy guitar sounds over simple but robust melodies, melding their

shoegaze sound with a pop undertow. The audience savored their dreamy sound, which filled the space with a loud bass that made their ears vibrate and their souls shake.

Towards the end of their set, the band played a game of limbo with a glowing light rod, inviting the audience to participate. Their stage presence practically spilled out of the room with how much space and vibrant energy they took up.

June Su ’27 said he adored the band’s performance. “Hotline TNT was excellent! I actually canceled plans to go somewhere so I could stay for the whole show because I loved it so much.”

WRMC concert directors Neel Shah ’26 and Addie Shandro ’26 worked to put together the show with WRMC’s general manager, Natalie Penna ’24. Penna said this show was the product of lots of meetings in the Proctor lounge and a strong bond between the board members.

“It is very much a team effort all the time, especially this year. There are so many logistics that go into planning a concert, and those responsibilities are all shared between people,” she said.

Shah is also a huge fan of DJ Lucas, and was the one to recommend that WRMC have him perform.

“I love him, I just think he’s awesome! I mean he talks about Hannafords and I was like, ‘We have Hannafords here,’” he said.

Beyond the more comical side of his music, Shah said that he appreciates how much DJ Lucas owns his Western Massachusetts identity.

“A lot of the biggest rappers in the world are from really cool places like Atlanta or New York. And for this guy, it’s the exact same thing, true to that spirit of just repping where you’re from and being true to yourself.”

Having two completely different artists together on one stage was very unique and special.

“It’s a stage that is not going to be shared again most likely,” Shandro said.

Shah said he was worried the artists wouldn’t want to perform on the same night, but they were both excited to be playing.

“There was even a guy who came down from Burlington because he wanted to see the combo of them which was fantastic,” he said.

Penna described that the music scene at Middlebury can lean towards more folk artists like Noah Kahan. Remember the abundance of “Burlington” results on last year’s Spotify Wrapped? As a result, WRMC works to showcase and uplift the variety of diverse tastes that are present here on campus.

“Providing different spaces, musically, for people, is huge,” Penna said.

This concert tapped into a different genre from previous musical guests (last semester WRMC guests included Joseph



CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS  
DJ Lucas and Hotline TNT performed at the WRMC “Sepomana Spring Concert” on April 19.

Biss and Bodysync), DJ Lucas bringing hip-hop and Hotline TNT bringing their signature shoegaze and rock combine sound.  
Of course, be on the lookout

for WRMC’s final concert of the year in May. As Shah put it, “Having live music in general is so magical and fun.”

## Jamming Out

Egan Turner

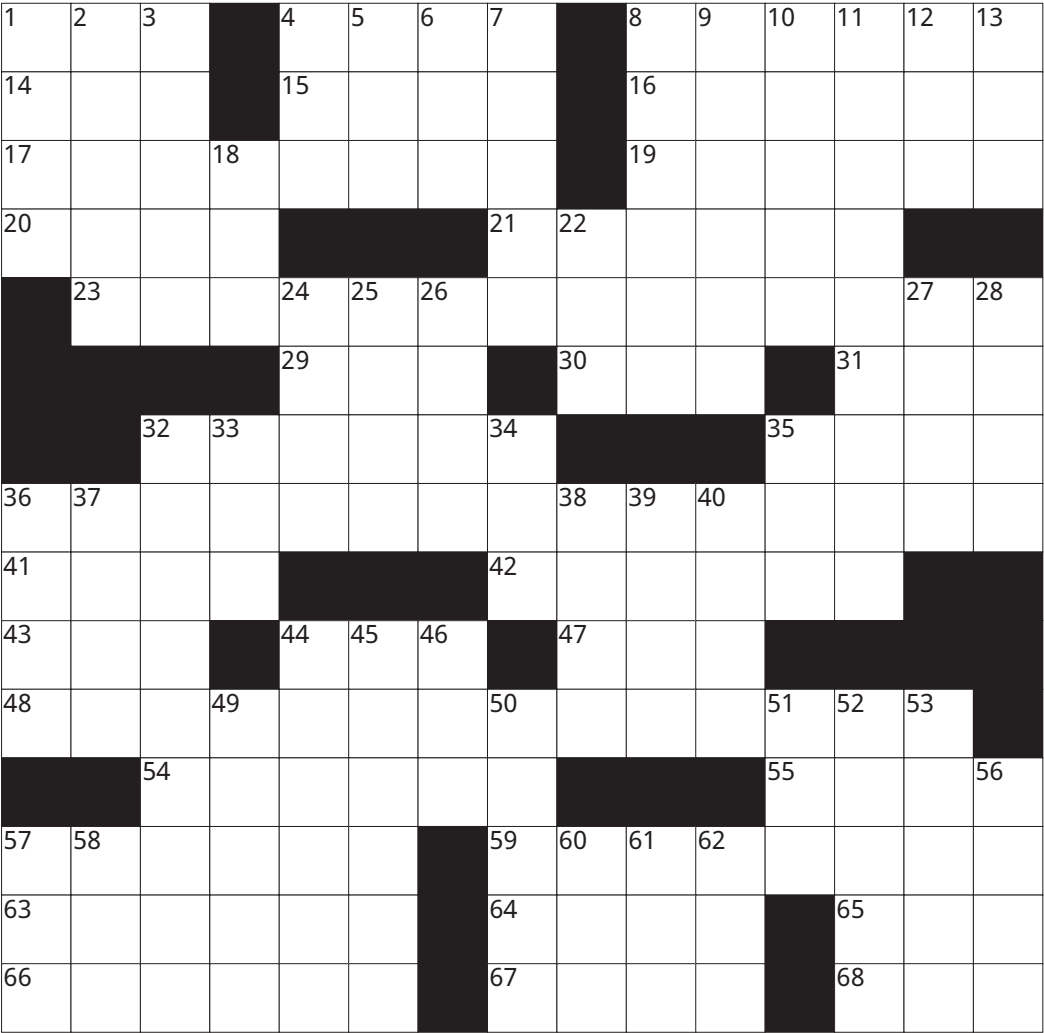
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# “THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT”; A SLOW-BURN EPIC

By **ACADIA KLEPEIS**

Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Since the news of Taylor Swift’s new album broke at the 2024 Grammy Awards, April 19 has been the most important date on my calendar (although graduation day is perhaps a close second). Published at midnight, the 16-song album “The Tortured Poets Department” (TTPD) was followed at 2 a.m. by the surprise release of “The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology,” adding 15 more songs and bringing the total listening time to over two hours. Some listeners protested, some rejoiced and all wondered: How do you reckon with such abundance?

If TTPD were a romance between music and listener, it would be a slow burn. The first time you meet, you aren’t quite sure what to think of it. You want to love it at first sight, but you don’t know each other well enough yet. By the time you reach the end of the 31 songs, you’re overstimulated, your brain oversaturated to the point where you can’t digest another frothy lyric of lost love. But like a priceless wine, heart-break and maybe Swift herself, some things improve with time.

On your second, third and hundredth listen, TTPD will grow on you.

The first half of the anthology comes out roaring with a poppy, processed sound that is unmistakably reminiscent of “Midnights.”

Is it trying too hard? Maybe. In a song that is half “Mastermind,” half “You’re on Your Own, Kid,” Swift proclaims “I Can Do It With a Broken Heart.” The use of footage from her record-shattering Eras Tour as the Spotify visual for the song makes lines like “All

the pieces of me shattered as the crowd was chanting, ‘More’” even more potent. Heavy on the sparkles, this song is more striking than subtle.

More nuanced is the haunting “So Long, London,” whose opening church bells turn out to have been alarm bells. Swift’s foregrounded vocals, densely-packed verses and gut-punch bridge (“And my friends said it isn’t right to be scared / Every day of a love affair / Every breath feels like rarest air / When you’re not sure if he wants to be there”) make the song a stand-out from the first listen.

Maybe all the other poets went to die at the lakes, but Swift is as alive as ever. Lyrically, the piano ballad “loml” proves that Swift has earned the title of TTPD chairperson, rhyming “legendary, “momentary,” and “cemetery” and weaving in the words “waltzing” and “embroidered” between clever lines like “better safe than starry-eyed.” The song’s final twist transforms the implied L-word with the devastating reveal that “you’re the loss of my life.”

Beyond the sadness, there is anger (perhaps unsurprising, given that the album was promoted using playlists based on the stages of grief). The much-discussed “Florida!!!,” whose triple punctuation is viscerally palpable in the heavy beats of each chorus, imagines bodies sinking in the swamp, recalling both Swift’s revenge anthem “no body no crime” and the marshlands of the novel-turned-film “Where the Crawdads Sing,” for which Swift wrote “Carolina.” Guns, pistols and the verb “die” circulate freely across tracks. The first half of the album presents every emotion in its strongest form, undiluted as a splash of blood.

The second half of the album

stays truer to its muted sepia color scheme, more evocative of the stripped-down sister albums “Folklore” and “Evermore.” The latter 15 tracks meander through Swift’s reinventions, offering something for every era of fan. Indeed, Swifties will adore unpicking the smattering of more specific callbacks to her previous works. In a reversal of the scarf Swift left in her ex’s care in “All Too Well,” TTPD’s title track opens with the line “You left your typewriter at my apartment.” (Given the album’s bookish promotional aesthetic, more of this breed of English major-esque content would have been welcome). Musically, “But Daddy I Love Him” echoes

old-Taylor country era, as does her white dress in the Spotify visual, while certain TTPD lyrics respond to her earlier writing (think the admission in “So Long, London” that “I’m not the one” versus “it would’ve been fun if you would’ve been the one” in “the 1”).

For all its callbacks, TTPD cannot be accused of being stuck in the past. The album is decidedly of its decade. The moment in “The Black Dog” when Swift wincingly watches her ex’s location (“you forgot to turn it off”) is a uniquely 21st-century phenomenon. Her double mentions of “Kens” (in “Hits Different” and “My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys”) and the line “he took me

out of my box” can’t read the same after last summer’s “Barbie.” Even the “Clara Bow” reference to “a full eclipse” feels specific to 2024. This contemporary specificity feels new for Swift, who so often strives for timelessness.

If TTPD were a poem, it would have to be an epic. Truthfully, though, the 31 songs could use some editing. Some lines are clunky (“You take my ring off my middle finger / And put it on the one people put wedding rings on”), others goofy (“We declared Charlie Puth should be a bigger artist” or “my friends all smell like weed or little babies”). “Fresh Out the Slammer” tops my list for songs to cut, while Swift’s explosively controversial wish to live in “the 1830s but without all the racists and getting married off for the highest bid” ruins the otherwise beautiful “I Hate It Here,” a grown-up, melancholic version of “seven” in which Swift declares, “I’ll save all my romanticism for my inner life.”

It seems the validation of Swift’s crowning as TIME’s 2023 Person of the Year has opened her up to taking more risks. Her lyrics are playful (“I’m havin’ his baby / No, I’m not, but you should see your faces”), unabashed (first-name references to friends — and enemies — abound) and creative (“My beloved ghost and me / Sitting in a tree / D-Y-I-N-G”). Even for an industry trendsetter, her choice to buck tradition by not releasing singles and then daringly doubling her track count is telling. In the last year, Swift has effectively taken over the world. For her, there are no more rules. In a drop-kick answer to the question “what would you do if you could do anything?,” TTPD responds simply: “Everything.”



COURTESY PHOTO/ TAYLOR SWIFT

Swift’s latest album, “The Tortured Poets Department,” conveys a range of emotions across its 31 tracks.

## Reel Critic: “I Saw the TV Glow”

By **MARIAH RIVERA**

Contributing Writer

A 24 film “I Saw the TV Glow” is the second release from Jane Schoenbrun after their 2021 debut, “We’re All Going to the World’s Fair.” The new film, which is slated for release on May 3, follows two teenagers named Maddy and Owen who bond over a midnight TV show called “The Pink Opaque.” After Maddy mysteriously disappears, reality starts to crack as we follow Owen’s descent into hysteria. The genre-bending film offers a deeper commentary on loneliness and gender, but it is nevertheless a puzzle in itself.

“I Saw the TV Glow” was shown at Middlebury on Thursday, April 18 as a part of the Hirschfield Thursdays series in Dana Auditorium.

After Owen and Maddie first watch “The Pink Opaque,” they drift apart and are only connected when Maddy leaves tapes of the show for Owen to watch. When she disappears, the only thing left behind is her TV burning in the backyard. Owen’s perception of reality starts to shift after this as “The Pink Opaque” becomes more than just a late-night TV show.

The film is visually stunning. If you too were obsessed with “Stranger Things” during the summer of 2022, you’ll love how certain scenes utilize light and color to create a sense of uneasiness. This low-key lighting creates a high contrast between dark tones and accents of color. The style is often used in analog horror or found footage films that Jane Schoenbrun knows well — the director demonstrated their ingenuity in that genre with their first film.

The aesthetics of the film helped to bring emotion out of the viewer even when the dialogue between the two characters was sparse. The contrast between cool, dark scenes and a recurring one in



COURTESY PHOTO

“I Saw the TV Glow” explores explores themes of emotion, silence and gender. The film will be released in theaters on May 3.

which Owen tends to a fire gives us a glimpse into his psyche. The darker scenes are accompanied by a cool tone that brings us into Owen’s world and creates a sense of loneliness. In contrast, the scene of Owen tending to a fire is a symbol for the warmth and solace Owen finds in “The Pink Opaque.”

The film’s grainy flashes harken back to ’80s and ’90s nostalgia. The world of “The Pink Opaque” is campy, to say the least. The characters are something straight out of a pre-CGI ’90s horror film. Fans of camp movies or cult classics like “Killer Klowns from Outer Space” or “Tales from the Crypt” will love the horror aspect of the movie. The gaudiness and absurdity that the film entails is one of its highlights.

One of the best parts about “I Saw The TV Glow” is the soundtrack. The inclusion of tracks by Phoebe Bridgers and Alex G fit perfectly into the teen-oriented film and add to the

melancholy of its protagonists. The theme “Anthems for a Seventeen Year-Old Girl” by Yeule emulates the atmosphere of the film better than any review can. With its stripped-back sound and underground elements that can only be found in the depths of “internet music,” it fits perfectly into the plot. The electronic accents on the song create the effect that you’re listening to a scratched CD rather than a digital recording, giving the feeling that there is a void that needs to be filled.

Growing up is painful, and both the film and the soundtrack encapsulate the feeling of being out of place. Alex G also wrote the score for “We’re All Going to the World’s Fair,” and he delivered just as much in his contribution for “I Saw The TV Glow.”

Alex G is an anomaly. Calling his music indie rock would be doing a disservice since the melancholy sound produced can only be described as unnerving. The in-

tentions behind the music are vital, as it’s meant to resonate with the characters who don’t feel comfortable in their own skin.

However, the lack of development of “The Pink Opaque” can make the film feel like it’s trying too hard to become a cult classic. The dialogue touches briefly on gender, but upon further analysis, the entire film is a commentary on how the characters are each outcasts in their small, suburban town due to their interests and sexuality. Ultimately, their bond is formed over their shared obsession with “The Pink Opaque.”

The plot, however, becomes convoluted when mixed in with the lack of dialogue, time jumps and lack of context. There are also scenes in which Owen narrates the story by addressing the audience directly but never shares his or Maddie’s insights. Though you want to develop some sort of connection to either of the characters, the dialogue is so limited and cold

that the viewer is prevented from developing a true connection to either of the characters.

The coming-of-age aspect of the film is one of its biggest draws. The “Pink Opaque” lands somewhere between a kid’s show and a horror show that speaks to the feeling of not being a child, yet simultaneously having a fear of being an adult. As the two characters unravel their queer identities, paralleling the sense of freedom they find in “The Pink Opaque,” the theme of escape dominates.

Overall, Schoenbrun has created a film unlike any other. The cohesion between the visual aesthetics and the soundtrack creates a world that encapsulates the viewer and leaves them hanging on to every scene. The film blurs the genres of film and is enigmatic in both its plot and character development, challenging the audience to question the characters’ existence and sanity.

# TRACK AND FIELD TEAM CELEBRATES ITS SENIORS, GEARS UP FOR NESCACS

By **CHARLIE KEOHANE**

*Editor at Large*

The men's and women's track and field teams celebrated their seniors at the final home meet of the season. While the April 20 meet was not scored, the teams reported many personal records (PRs) and high spirits heading into the NESCAC championships at Tufts University this coming weekend.

The women's team tallied 16 first-place finishes, nearly sweeping the field events with wins in the javelin, hammer, shot put, triple jump, high jump and pole vault. Madeline Saunders '25 won the discus with 40.99 meters, following her recent record-breaking throw of 41.57 meters which she achieved the previous week at the Carla Coffey Invitational at Smith College.

In the running events, the women's team snagged first place in both the 4x100 meter relay and the 4x400 meter relay. The Panthers also won the 1,500-meter race, 800-meter race, 400-meter hurdles, 400-meter race, 200-meter race, 100-meter hurdles and 100-meter dash. Katie Bruno '26 crossed the finish line first in the 100-meter dash, stopping the clock at 12.54 seconds for a college PR.

In addition to Bruno, many members of the women's team achieved PRs, including Nikky Sztachelski '25.

"It was my last meet of the season, so it was great to end off on a good note with two new PRs in the 400 and 200," Sztachelski wrote in a message

to The Campus. "It's always nice competing at home and not having to worry about waking up early to catch a long bus drive, and because it's home it means our friends and family can come and support, which is amazing."

On the men's side, 13 Panthers achieved a first-place finish. The men's team won the 3,000-meter

steeplechase, 1,500-meter race, 400-meter dash, 400-meter hurdles and 110-meter hurdles. Additionally, they won seven field events, including the high jump, triple jump, pole vault, shot put, discus, hammer and javelin.

"I always feel like the home meet is a lot of fun because it is pretty low stakes. It's like the

tune up before NESCACs, and a lot of people's families come out and friends from Midd. Everyone gets really excited this time of year," said Peter Burke '24, co-captain of the men's team. Burke ran the 1,500-meter race, finishing third after Alec Gironda '24 secured first place just 4.64 seconds earlier.

Before the meet began, the seniors on the men's and women's sides were honored. Meghan McEnroe '24.5, co-captain of the women's team, enjoyed both the ceremony and strong sense of community at the meet.

"I did 400 hurdles, which I was really excited about. We had a really nice ceremony before for seniors, and I think me and Ciara Dale, another one of the women's captains, were really excited to finish off the normal season doing the event we've always done. That was really nice closure," McEnroe said.

Burke echoed the sentimental value of the ceremony. "It definitely feels a little bittersweet as a senior, but I'm enjoying it," Burke said. "Coming to the end of the senior year, I'm definitely grateful for my years on the track team."

Looking forward, the Panthers are turning their attention to the upcoming NESCAC Championship at Tufts University on April 27. The women's team has won the NESCACs for the past two years, while the men's team finished fourth overall last year.

"I'm excited. I think we have a lot of pressure and pride on the line from the two years of winning, but I think the women's team has what it takes and that we're the grittiest team out there," McEnroe said.

That grit will be tested this weekend as the women's team looks to win their fifth championship and become the second-most winning team in NESCAC history.



CHARLIE KEOHANE / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*The women's track and field team took home 16 first-place finishes at its senior day meet on April 20.*

## Seven Questions with Abby Jankowski '25

By **BROOKE FRIBERG**

*Sports Editor*

Abby Jankowski '25, originally from Methuen, Mass., is a pitcher for the Middlebury Softball team. Jankowski was named an Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches' Association All-American Scholar Athlete in 2022 and 2023, and a member of the NESCAC All-Academic team in 2023.

In this edition of seven questions, Jankowski shares her story of playing softball, her excitement about a new addition to the team next fall and her favorite restaurant in Middlebury.

**Brooke Friberg:** When did you begin playing softball, and what was your journey leading up to playing at Middlebury?

**Abby Jankowski:** I first started playing softball when I was probably around eight years old, trying out a bunch of different sports. I always loved the competitive nature of softball, and it's a "game of failure" — that's a pretty well known quote — so you face a lot of adversity and learn how to get through hard obstacles and to keep your head up. Even if you strike out once, your next at-bat could be a home run. I think the game can change really quickly, and that's what I love about the game, you never know what's going to happen. So, leading up to Middlebury, I always loved that about softball, and I love to be able to do that here at a high academic DIII school, where I get to do what I love for four more years.

**BF:** Why did you choose Middlebury?

**AJ:** I chose Middlebury because I went to a New England boarding

school and absolutely loved it. I'm also from New England, the Boston area, so I always knew I wanted to stay in New England. When I walked onto Middlebury's campus and saw the white brick buildings, I could really see myself there, and I felt very at home. I wasn't sure about how rural it was going to be, but it's been amazing. I love to ski, so in J-Term, being in the mountains and having the Snow Bowl has been so fun, and I've created a lot of memories here. I'm really glad that I chose [Middlebury] for the softball program as well.

**BF:** Do you have a top moment with Middlebury softball so far?

**AJ:** I think one of my favorite memories is being able to go to Florida with the softball team every March and staying in a house with all of my teammates. We always have a lot of fun — you can goof around and you get to be together for a week — and it's when we really bond as a team. In a more softball-specific way, last year, we played an amazing game against Tufts, who was nationally ranked, and we went to extra innings with them and just barely lost. It was a heartbreaker, but the energy in that game was unmatched, and everyone was so focused, so into the game, and so loud in the dugout. That's what I think will stick with me for the rest of my life.

**BF:** What's the best thing about your teammates?

**AJ:** Well, we're very goofy, so I love that about them. I feel like even if I'm having a bad day, I can always come to the locker room, come to practice and be engaged with 14 other people who love softball as much as I do and will support me no matter what. It's very encouraging not only to play softball with these people, but to be friends with these people. I

think we have a good balance of having a good time, having fun, but also being focused and all coming together to try to achieve a common goal. So, I love them.

**BF:** What are your favorite and least favorite parts of playing softball?

**AJ:** I definitely think that the hardest thing about playing Middlebury softball would be the time management, and being able to do everything you need to do, especially when it gets down to finals, kind of like it is right now, where everything is picking up and softball is also picking up. But my favorite thing is getting

to have such a great balance between being very competitive academically, but also being very competitive on the field. Also, having coaches who support you and want you to achieve your goals, and are looking out for you, has been very comforting and helpful over my three years here.

**BF:** How does it feel knowing that next year your younger sister Alison will be here playing softball with you?

**AJ:** I'm so excited. I think it's so crazy how things worked out, and I'm really excited to show her all of the reasons why I love Middlebury and to be able to

make memories with her, and also for her to find her own experience at Middlebury, I'm excited to see where she goes after I'm gone, and where Middlebury takes her. I'm excited to compete with her and create so many memories with her on and off the field.

**BF:** What's your favorite place to eat in town?

**AJ:** Definitely Two Bros. I've had many different menu items, and all of them have been very good. So I'd say Two Brothers for the vibe, the food, all of the above.

*Editor's Note: this interview has been lightly edited for clarity.*



COURTESY PHOTO / MIKE WATERS

*Jankowski throws a pitch during a game. The Panthers are 17-11 so far this season, and are looking forward to Senior Day at home on May 4.*